

**REGENT GHANA LIBRARY**  
**FIVE YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN 2014-2019**

**Mission**

The Regent University Library will be an essential partner in teaching, learning, research and scholarly communication. The Library will be known for providing access to world-class resources in all formats, with physical and virtual spaces that encourage reflection, intellectual exploration and academic interaction. Working with others, the Library will be an innovative leader for the University community as scholarly communication systems are transformed. The services will be provided by an expert, flexible and responsive staff who will interact with faculty, staff and students to create a critical mass of top students, faculty and professional staff. As the University evolves to establish a strong position locally and internationally, the Library will strive to play a major role in the creation of a world-class university.

To achieve this Mission the Library will:

- o Facilitate access to an integrated range of high quality information sources to support the needs of staff and students
- o Offer a pleasant, modern library environment that is conducive to study
- o Offer innovative services which meet the particular needs of Regent's students and staff, ensuring that service quality is regularly monitored and reviewed
- o Deliver a high quality service by a team of professional, friendly, and user-focused staff
- o Enable students to acquire the skills needed to find, evaluate, use, and present information in their studies
- o Promote awareness of the Library's resources and services and how they can support learning, teaching, research, and administration

**Vision**

The next 5 years will see greater dependence on digital information to support teaching, learning, research, and scholarship. The Library will need to place greater emphasis on electronic services. The physical library will remain the hub for delivery of library services, combining access to print collections whilst offering the learning spaces that 21<sup>st</sup> Century learners will expect. There will be greater dependence on technology to drive service improvements as well as make the Library as easy to use as possible. A technology focused service would facilitate longer opening hours, and free up staff time to provide essential study and research support needed by the Regent community.

**Library strategic objectives 2014-2019**

**Getting the basics right**

The Library will put Regent Ghana students and staff at the heart of its services, and will proactively seek the views of students and staff on how it is performing and how it should be developed. The following strategic objectives, which will be based on feedback from users and library staff, will be taken forward as a priority.

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- *To make the Library as easy to use independently as possible and manage the collections in ways that assist users in finding the books that they need by:-*
  - Getting returned books back on the shelves quicker, improving service standards in this area, and consistently maintaining the tidiness of the shelves
- *To make access and use of electronic resources services as easy as possible by:-*
  - Drawing on best practice for authentication of e-resources and services
  - Integrating access to electronic resources from the virtual learning environment, portals, and other appropriate gateways
- *To develop, manage, and maintain study areas that **suite** all styles of learning by:-*
  - Providing silent, group, and individual study zones adaptable to changing user needs
  - Reviewing the use of space available for studying, deploying staff to manage the study environment, and reviewing sanctions against those who fail to respect the needs of others
- *To place help and support at the centre of the Library service by:-*
  - Reviewing and enhancing help services provided through the Library Help Desk, through email, and by telephone
  - Enhancing user support by freeing up staff time through use of self-service machines
- *To raise awareness of Library services available to students and all staff by:*
  - Engaging in more effective marketing of library services
  - Develop and promote inductions and information skills that equip users to exploit library resources and services effectively
- *To provide a high level of user support by:*
  - Training and developing the skills of staff to offer high quality support to users
  - Building a quality assurance cycle that reviews library services regularly

Performance against these strategic objectives will be assessed against improvements in satisfaction and other ratings in the annual library survey, through feedback at staff/student exchanges, user comments, blogs, academic reviews, and other sources.

**The enabling objectives and key themes below will drive forward the strategic objectives:**

### **Availability for all**

- To ensure that library resources and facilities are as independently accessible by all user groups of Regent, including disabled users
- To extend library opening hours, in line with demand and as funding permits
- To understand user experiences - Faculty, staff and students have new patterns of teaching, learning and research. The Libraries will be most successful if we know library users well, recognize the differences among groups of users, and plan services, spaces and programs that reflect user needs, interests and work styles.

### **Supporting research**

- To review the level of support that is given to the research community and to solicit the views of Schools on the emphasis to be given to library support for research

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- To collaborate with other libraries, especially those in the private university sector to provide tangible benefits to researchers
- To seek to address the level of information resources provision by raising additional funding, and to monitor the impact on Library collection development of School research strategic plans that place greater emphasis on postgraduate study
- To advance new opportunities for research and teaching partnerships - Faculty and students now carry out their research, teaching and service differently from in the past. Scholars share research results in ways that go beyond traditional commercial publishers. In addition to traditional roles of gathering resources and providing access to scholarship, the Libraries can play important new roles in working directly with scholars during the research process, being advocates for open publishing models and providing stewardship of data.

### **Supporting teaching and learning**

- To review the balance between print collections and study facilities and to develop learning spaces in the libraries at various campuses, and in the new building at McCarthy Hill which meet the expectations of 21<sup>st</sup> century learners
- To identify and replace the books in the high demand with e-books and electronic readings, and to introduce an online reading lists facility
- To work with IT Department and the Schools to develop information literacy training that students need in order to be effective independent learners
- To collaborate with cognate departments such as the Regent Learning Centre and the centre for Pre-University Education to provide study skills support to all students

### **Electronic services**

- To place greater emphasis on the Library's e-services, by transferring resources and by reassessing the staffing structures/roles needed to support e-services in the future
- To work in partnership with IT Department and in consultation with Schools, in mapping and reviewing Library e-services and put in place a strategy for their future development which is holistic, sustainable, deploys integrated user authentication procedures, and is in synergy with the Regent's e-learning strategy
- To plan for the replacement of the Excel database library catalogue with a proprietary or open source Library Management system, to identify requirements, to assess options, and to seek funding for a replacement system
- To make more digital content available to support learning, teaching, and research, including e-books, and to build/extend library digitisation initiatives
- To play a central role in the management of digital assets in the College, and assist academics by providing guidance on copyright, organising the digital objects, handling the metadata, and preserving the content in digital repositories
- To automate more routine library processes, and increase the proportion of activity undertaken by self-service
- To explore technology to offer inter-library loans for essential study or research publications, especially Secure Electronic Delivery of journal articles
- To emphasise digital materials, tools and services - An increasing number of materials that faculty and students use and create while teaching, learning, or conducting research are digital. Scholarship in digital form extends beyond digital text—it includes a diverse array of formats such as data sets, images, audio, and video. In addition to digital content, there is also an expanding range of new digital tools to support writing, collaboration, citation management, data analysis, and other scholarly activities. While continuing to collect print

materials, the Libraries also will need to manage a growing proportion of digital materials, a wider variety in formats, and new digital tools.

### **The information environment**

The availability of digital library content has grown rapidly over the last ten years. E-journals, databases, and other digital resources are now mainstream academic information sources. These are convenient to search online by students and staff, from their own home or office, at times that suit them. In a growing number of disciplines, these digital resources are as important to academics and students as print resources. Over the next five years, considerably more digital content will become available. This will be through more content that is 'born digital', parallel print and electronic publishing, and digitisation initiatives. There is likely to be increasing interest and engagement with open access initiatives, such as e-prints archives, which seek to more widely disseminate the products of research and scholarly work.

### **Blending new with traditional**

The physical library will remain the hub for library service provision in tertiary education institutions. However, there will be increased remote use of digital collections. The print collections in libraries represent centuries of knowledge and these will not be replaced readily by digital resources. However, the digital revolution offers scope to free up library space to offer greater depth to collections and to provide library environments which meet the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> Century learners and researchers. This is particularly the case where libraries work together in partnership to harmonise their collections and preserve print materials which are needed infrequently.

### **Higher student expectations**

Student expectations of the services provided by their universities will grow over the next five years. As students spend a considerable amount of time in using libraries and their resources, the Regent Library will inevitably be a significant partner in the overall student experience and their evaluation of it. Many students at Regent have limited time for their studies, as they are usually combining studies with work. They need facilities and services that are easy to use and readily accessible. Students are likely to demand more resources and extensions to services, including library opening hours. Social space, group or collaborative learning space and individual learning areas are the expectations of the many students.

### **Recognising diversity**

The student community at Regent is considerably more diverse as in many higher education institutions in the country. In particular, there is a wider age profile and, in view of the more mature student population, there will be a greater proportion of students with low IT skills. The Library must cater for that diversity and recognise that it is likely that students at Regent will require more help and may have less confidence in the use of technology.

### **Working in partnership**

Libraries of higher education institutions have a tradition of networking and close working. More emphasis will be placed on these partnerships and the promotion of consortia over the next five years as the 'shared services' agenda becomes stronger and as pressures on resources lead to the need to maximise the limited space and funding available. Regent is well placed to initiate and build partnerships with its historic close association with the other libraries of the country, especially the KNUST. It also includes the new relationships that are being forged amongst the Librarians in the private university sector.

### **Changing roles for libraries and librarians**

Libraries will continue to be heavily dependent on ICT to deliver their traditional services and will be looking at deploying new technologies to further automate and streamline routine processes. In particular, the wider implementation of automated self-services will facilitate the redeployment of staff from routine activities to meeting new service demands. Changes in staffing structures will be needed, to place greater emphasis on the development and maintenance of e-services, at the expense of more traditional activities. There will be staff development needs arising from the changing nature of library service delivery, involvement in new areas of activity, a greater need for developmental project work, and a shift away from more routine activities.

Staff as life-long learners – Just as the University strives to develop students as life-long learners, we recognize the importance of continual professional development for library staff. The new plan should provide opportunities for staff to learn to use new tools and offer support as they adjust to changing work flows and new roles. In particular, we would sponsor staff events and follow-up activities that explain University priorities and their implications for the Library.

### **Change in a resource constrained environment**

The next five years will not be without challenges for Regent Ghana Library. Funding is likely to remain constrained. The absolute priority is to maximise expenditure on information resources but there needs to be a step change in funding levels for information resources to levels that compare favourably with our benchmark partners. Through business process review and greater use of technology, the Library needs to ensure that services continue to be operated as cost-effectively as possible. Opportunities for generating additional income will be need to be explored.

Similarly, in view of Regent's central Accra location, space pressures in the Library are likely to remain acute. Options for addressing this problem are to allocate more space to users, and withdraw lesser used materials, or to place more printed material in on-site storage or a serviced off-site storage facility. The most immediate pressures are to increase study places, to increase the number of IT workstations, and to improve the spacing of the shelves in the Libraries to increase accessibility to all users including those who use wheelchairs. The final major pressure will be to manage the change which will be necessary to re-focus the Library to the changing needs of users and the higher proportion of electronic information in the digital age.

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